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IC 75-2452

25 JUL 1975

Dr. Edward W. Proctor
Deputy Director for Intelligence
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C. 20505

Dear Ed:

During recent meetings of the NSCIC Working Group, Ambassador Ellsworth and other members have pressed for the production of a paper on the problem of how to explicitly state uncertainties in intelligence estimates. I would like to bring you up to date on this matter, and request your assistance.

This is not exactly a new problem, as anyone familiar with Sherman Kent's efforts to wrestle with it will remember. Yet it is clear that high-level users of intelligence are still seized with it. Accordingly I have seen to it that briefings to the NSCIC Working Group address points related to probabilities and confidence levels on topics such as SALT, MBFR, and Warning.

Members of the Working Group welcomed these responses but suggested that together they provide only "30-40 percent" of the answer to the broad question. The Group wishes us now to cover the problem of expressing uncertainties in the "softer" areas--e.g., in political judgments. I have agreed to see what could be done.

In this connection, I would like to draw on the expertise in the DDI. There would be value--I believe--in a study that reviews the various attacks on the problem over the years and draws some general conclusions on where we now stand.

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Approved For Release 2003/12/09 : CIA-RDP84B00506R000100140013-6

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[] has informally consulted Lew Lapham about this matter and Lew said he would be glad to give the matter some thought. Please let me know how you react to the idea.

Sincerely,

/s/ Samuel V. Wilson

Samuel V. Wilson
Lieutenant General, USA
Deputy to the DCI for the
Intelligence Community

cc: Director of Political
Research

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